

*Especially**for***SENIORS**

WINTER, 1977-78

We helped to build Canada — we must help to save it

A letter to you from
Hope Holmsted, Chairman
Ontario Advisory Council
on Senior Citizens.

I am calling all Seniors to be concerned and to take action, as individuals or as members of groups or organizations.

We, who have had the privilege of living longer than many in our community, carry the responsibility to that community and to our country, Canada.

What are we doing today to keep Canada together? What are we doing to reestablish and maintain a sense of community with those who live around us? Does it really matter of what ethnocultural background we are and does it matter what language we speak?

No one is stopping us from speaking our language . . . What I am really talking about is preserving and reestablishing that sense of concern for one's neighbor—an effort on the part of all of us to understand the other person's point of view.

Canada is made up of people from many origins and countries—some have been here for thousands of years—some for hundreds—and some have joined us only recently. If not ourselves—then certainly our forefathers came from all over the world and we all contribute our special outlook and way of living to make a Canadian way of life.

We, older people, have helped to build a Canada which our children will continue to build, because a country that does not grow dies in the end.

What is our special contribution today and now?

We were brought up in times when neighborliness was the key to a happy life—now at this period of disunity and uncertainty about many things we can make

an all-out effort to conserve what has kept us together.

Don't sit back and say: "I am only an English or French speaking Canadian—why worry, let THEM go their own way . . ." In reality, though, the THEM we talk about are *our* neighbors.

We need each other and we need just as much all the other groups from different countries who have contributed to Canada and added so much wealth to this country as well as color and interest to our lives.

Let's not go searching around for our Canadian identity. We have an identity—we actually are part of it! Instead, let us focus on what each of us can do and somehow I think that older people can begin to lead the way towards unity and progress.

Let us talk to each other, explore each others' concerns, make opportunities to meet and share—and let's not be afraid to go more than half-way. What a rewarding challenge for leadership for those of us who are leaders.

I am not only talking about the concerns of all of us—Native Peoples, French and English speaking and other ethnocultural groups living in harmony in a united Canada. I am also talking about working together and solving such problems as pollution, helping with the conservation of our natural resources, planning integrated and new services that help all those who are in need.

Can we Seniors turn down this challenge? We say that Seniors need to be needed—well, we are needed *now*—the world is in a mess, Canada is in a very dicey situation—unemployment, cost of living, uneasiness about the future. If you have not faced these issues, now is the time to begin.

Get small groups of your



HOPE HOLMSTED

friends and neighbors together, start talking and devising practical ways of solving mutual concerns. It does not matter how many years you have left to live—just don't sit them out—make them count! Seek help from others by asking people to join you to explain and discuss the issues. Read! And foremost of all, *care* about Canada and about your neighbors.

All I am saying to you—each of you—who read this newsletter is that a high percentage of people

in your own communities are 60 years of age and over—there is strength in numbers and a wealth of wisdom—you can do something—*do it now!*

Your ideas will be appreciated. Please tell us and we shall share them with others. If you want ideas, write us and ask.

In the meantime—do something, wherever or whenever you are. Seniors now have the chance of a lifetime to make a real contribution to Canada.

Nous avons aider à bâtir le Canada Nous devons également le sauver

Lettre à vous tous
de Hope Holmested, président
Conseil consultatif de l'Ontario
sur les personnes âgées

Je fais appel à toutes les personnes âgées pour qu'elles s'intéressent et qu'elles fassent quelque chose, individuellement ou dans les groupes et les organisations auxquels elles appartiennent.

Nous, qui avons eu le privilège de vivre plus longtemps que bien d'autres dans notre communauté, avons des responsabilités envers cette communauté et envers notre pays, le Canada.

Que faisons-nous aujourd'hui pour garder le Canada uni? Que faisons-nous pour rétablir et maintenir un sentiment de communauté avec ceux qui vivent autour de nous? Est-ce que notre origine ethnoculturelle a beaucoup d'importance, est-ce que la langue que nous parlons a beaucoup d'importance? Personne ne nous empêche de parler notre langue... Ce dont je veux vraiment parler, c'est de préserver et de rétablir ce sentiment d'intérêt pour son voisin—un effort de la part de chacun d'entre nous pour comprendre le point de vue de l'autre.

Le Canada est fait de gens qui viennent de plusieurs origines et de plusieurs pays—certains sont ici depuis des milliers d'années—d'autres depuis des centaines—et d'autres viennent tout juste de se joindre à nous. Nos ancêtres, sinon nous-mêmes, sont venus de tous les pays du monde et nous avons tous apporté notre perspective et notre mode de vie pour en faire un mode de vie canadien.

Nous, les personnes âgées, avons aidé à construire un Canada que nos enfants continueront à bâtir, parce qu'on pays dont la croissance s'arrête fini par mourir.

Quelle est notre contribution spéciale aujourd'hui et maintenant?

Nous avons été élevés à une époque où le bon voisinage était la clé d'une vie heureuse—maintenant, en cette époque de désunion et d'incertitude sur bien des choses, nous pouvons faire un effort extraordinaire pour conserver ce qui nous a tenu ensemble. Ne restez pas à l'écart en disant "je ne suis qu'un Canadien francophone ou anglophone—pourquoi me faire des soucis, laissons-LES faire ce qu'ils veulent..." En réalité, cependant, ce LES dont nous parlons, ce sont nos voisins. Nous avons besoin les uns des autres et nous avons tout autant besoin de tous les autres groupes de différents pays qui ont contribué au Canada et tant apporté de richesses à notre pays ainsi que de couleur et d'intérêt à notre vie.

N'allons pas chercher ailleurs notre identité canadienne. Nous avons une identité—en fait, nous en faisons partie! Concentrons-nous plutôt sur ce que chacun d'entre nous peut faire et, d'une certaine façon, je pense que les personnes âgées peuvent commencer à montrer la voie de l'unité et du progrès. Parlons-nous les uns les autres, étudions les problèmes des autres, créons des occasions de se rencontrer et de partager nos idées—et n'ayons pas peur d'en faire plus que notre part. Quel défi passionnant à relever pour ceux d'entre nous qui sont des leaders.

Je ne parle pas seulement des inquiétudes de chacun d'entre nous—autochtones, francophones, anglophones et autres groupes ethnoculturels vivant en harmonie dans un Canada uni—je parle également de travailler ensemble pour résoudre des problèmes tels que la pollution, pour

aider à économiser nos richesses naturelles, pour planifier des services nouveaux et intégrés qui aident tous ceux qui sont dans le besoin.

Nous, les personnes âgées, pouvons-nous rejeter ce défi? Nous disons que l'on devrait avoir besoin des personnes âgées—et bien, on a besoin de nous maintenant—le monde est en désordre, le Canada est dans une situation très dangereuse—le chômage, le coût de la vie, le malaise devant l'avenir... Si vous n'avez encore jamais pensé à ces questions, c'est maintenant qu'il faut commencer. Rassemblez des petites groupes d'amis et de voisins, commencez à discuter et à trouver des moyens pratiques de résoudre certains problèmes communs. Le nombre d'années qu'il vous reste à vivre n'a aucune importance—ne les laissez pas filer—faites-les compter! Recherchez l'aide des autres en demandant

aux gens de se joindre à vous pour expliquer les problèmes et en discuter. Lisez! Et ce qui est le plus important de tout, intéressez-vous au Canada et à votre voisin.

Tout ce que j'ai à vous dire—chacun d'entre vous—à vous qui lisez ce bulletin, c'est qu'un grand pourcentage de résidents de votre communauté ont soixante ans et plus—le nombre donne une grande force et beaucoup de sagesse—vous pouvez faire quelque chose—faites-le maintenant!

Vos idées seront appréciées, veuillez nous les faire connaître et nous les partagerons avec d'autres. Si vous voulez des idées, écrivez-nous pour le demander.

En attendant, faites quelque chose, qui que vous soyez et où que vous soyez. Les personnes âgées ont maintenant la chance de leur vie d'apporter une réelle contribution au Canada.

Beware 'quack' arthritis cures

Arthritis sufferers are frequently referred to as the most exploited of all sick people, reports The Arthritis Society.

"Because arthritis is a chronic disease which waxes and wanes with intermittent periods of remission, and one for which there is no cure, arthritis lends itself to the deception of quacks," the Society points out. "Quackery thrives on ignorance and fear".

Frauds and rackets robbed arthritis sufferers in Canada of nearly \$50 million last year alone. Much of this money was spent by sufferers of rheumatoid arthritis, the most common and serious form of the disease. While long-term medical treatment can control the pain and help prevent disability, investigators have not yet found the cure.

"It is natural for people with a chronic painful disease to clutch at anything that might offer them hope of relief. In the absence of a cure people are apt to turn to quackery which preys on the natural inclination of people to want to get well," says the Society. And quacks are only too ready to exchange their dollars for worthless "cures." The quack is interested in money, not disease.

Wearing copper bracelets or gold coins, using vibrators, and other mechanical or electronic devices are among the most popular gadgets offered to arthritis sufferers. Many are also taken in by the promises that special diets or health foods, such as eating garlic or taking alfalfa tablets, will help their arthritis. This directly contradicts medical research proving that foods play

no role in causing arthritis and that foods cannot possibly cure the disease.

Sometimes, "cures" are offered by well-meaning friends and relatives whose ideas are based on traditional folklore. Carrying buckeyes, potatoes, horse chestnuts and ingesting certain elixirs are examples of such quackery.

But more often these phoney nostrums—as well as more modern ones such as "moon dust"—are marketed by quacks who know full well that their products or treatments are useless. They count on gullibility and desperation of those in pain for their profit.

"Another factor which helps the quack survive is the unique nature of the disease," according to the Society. "The painful symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis may suddenly vanish for days, weeks, or months. So the quack knows that the disease may possibly seem to disappear whatever

he does for the victim. He can then claim the 'cure' was due to his products."

While most of the "remedies" may be harmless, the Society warns that using them may be dangerous in the long-run if the patient does not receive proper treatment before irreversible damage is done to the joints.

The Society stresses that early diagnosis and prompt treatment by a qualified physician can prevent disability in a majority of patients and emphasized that research to find a real cure for the disease is under way. Until a cure is found, The Arthritis Society warns against believing any one who claims to have a cure for the disease.

"Yet, for every dollar spent by responsible organizations this year in legitimate research for the cause and cure of arthritis, more than \$25 will be spent on useless quack remedies," said a Society spokesman.

Tips for Home Safety

Brought up to believe that cleanliness is next to Godliness and that shiny waxed floors are part of being clean, many of us are living in houses that are so dangerous they might as well be booby trapped.

We can't all afford wall to wall carpeting, but for our own sake we should try to make sure that the high traffic areas are not skating rinks.

Scatter rugs are attractive but they can be menaces unless they have a backing that will keep them anchored to the floor. Some people have found that rubber rings (the kind used in preserv-

ing jars) will do the trick.

Stairs of course should never be waxed and neither should bannisters. Should you trip you need something solid and non-slippery to grab.

You may be saving energy by cutting down on light bulb wattage but do not do it over the stairs. There you will need all the light you can get.

Another dangerous habit is placing objects on the stairs which you intend to take up later. Put such things in a basket or bag where no-one can trip over them. Then take them up all together and put them away.

LINK SKILLS EXCHANGE

Trade your know-how with someone else

The barter system is on its way back.

Not the trading of goods, but of services, and it should be of particular interest to seniors. We all have skills which others can use or we would not have lasted this long.

The new program will be called LINK Skills Exchange and is to be based on a fairly new, but gradually growing, project in England and Scotland.

Representatives from a number of Ontario senior citizens' organizations have had several meetings and at least seven communities have made either definite or tentative commitments to set up pilot projects. Both the United Senior Citizens of Ontario and Pensioners Concerned are on the committee as well as representatives from the Advisory Council.

In Great Britain the projects are neighborhood-oriented. A large area might have a number of LINK Skills Exchange Centres.

There is no paid staff. The coordinating centre is manned by people who receive a barter token

or stamp for each hour worked. Because no money is exchanged it does not affect the income or other benefits of either the recipient or the person providing the service.

It is an inexpensive set-up because there is no red tape. Cost in Britain last year was only \$2,000 for promotional materials. Extensive records are not necessary because only basic information is needed—a list of individuals with skills available and a list of individuals with requests for service.

The literature from England gives several examples of how LINK works, but this one will suffice to show how useful it can be.

Mrs. Jones is a widow, with a broken ironing board. She can't afford another one, nor can she mend it. She phones her local LINK Exchange Services branch and is put in touch with a Mr. Smith who has offered his skills as a handyman. He repairs the ironing board and Mrs. Jones pays him in LINK stamps.

He adds the stamps to others he has earned and spends them

with a retired music teacher from whom he is taking a course in sight-reading so he can join the local choir. The music teacher spends her stamps with an ex-accountant who helps her fill in her income tax returns, and so the chain grows.

In proposing the pilot projects, the committee members agree that LINK Skills Exchange should not replace existing voluntary talent—sharing activities. But it would add another option to the type of voluntary talent exchange within the community.

Senior Citizens' Clubs and Centres, apartment buildings, closely-knit neighborhoods, community centres, libraries, etc., would seem to be the most likely starting points for LINK projects.

There are many details still to be worked out, among them establishing a value for tokens (or stamps) in terms of the job performed, rather than in terms of time.

Many seniors, particularly women who have not worked, may feel they have no skills to offer. However there are many home-making skills which are very much needed by widowers

and bachelors—mending and cooking, to name two.

While the impetus to start LINK branches came from senior citizens' organizations, membership need not be limited to seniors. That decision would be made by the particular LINK Skills Exchange group.

It would be useful for Seniors too old to shovel snow, for example, to offer baby-sitting for snow removal. The plan has limitless possibilities.

Representatives of the Senior Citizens branch, Ministry of Community and Social Services, have been involved in all the planning.

By the Spring issue we hope to be able to tell you more about it, and how the newly-established pilot LINKs are faring.

The committee working on the establishment of LINK includes: Bess Anderson, Toronto; Jim Cuthbert, Mississauga; Hilda Dodge, Etobicoke; Stephen Dwyer, Hamilton; Helen Fowke, Toronto; Hope Holmsted, Toronto; Roy Shapiro, North York; Les Phillips, Waterloo; Tom Smith, Islington, and Alan Upshall, Willowdale.



GAINS recipients don't lose money return your forms

Each year more than 250,000 pensioners who receive the Ontario income supplement called GAINS, must report their income for the previous year to either the federal or Ontario governments. To help you, we've summarized the procedure to follow:

Senior citizens who *do not* qualify for the federal Old Age Security pension but who receive Ontario GAINS benefits will be mailed a *renewal application form* by February. You must use this form to report your 1977 income. This information is used

to determine whether you will qualify for GAINS for the period April, 1978 through March, 1979. The renewal form must be returned to the Ministry of Revenue by March 31.

Senior citizens who *do* qualify for the federal Old Age Security pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement as well as GAINS will receive their *renewal application form* from the Old Age Security office in January. It must be completed and returned by March 31.

You must report any income you had in 1977. Your monthly Guaranteed Income Supplement rate for the period April, 1978 through March, 1979 will be based on this information. Your entitlement to GAINS benefits will be determined automatically by the amount of Supplement you receive.

Remember, whether you receive your renewal application form from the federal or provincial government, it must be completed accurately and mailed as soon as possible. March and April present a heavy workload for processing renewal forms. Avoid being caught in the backlog.

If the renewal application is not received by March 31, a review of your eligibility for GAINS or the Guaranteed Income Supplement for the period April, 1978 through March, 1979 will be delayed. This could mean you would not receive any payments for several months.

If you have any questions on GAINS benefits, contact the Ministry of Revenue's multilingual Information Centre. In Metro Toronto, call 965-8470. Outside Toronto, you may call free of charge by asking the Operator for Zenith 8-2000.

Pilot Project

An interesting pilot project has begun in New York State where 100 elderly persons in the Rochester area have been supplied with citizens' band radios so they can call for help if they are victims of a crime.

The original plan called for 10,000 seniors to receive the CB radios but there was some question whether the low-frequency citizens band, with its current clutter and interference, would do the job in an emergency.

This feasibility study will determine the future of increasing the scope of the program.

WANTED

A design for the LINK Stamp.

Can any of our readers help?

ESPECIALLY FOR SENIORS is running a competition for our readers who have a talent for design. We need a Canadian stamp which conveys the idea of working together and has the word LINK included.

It can be in two or more colors — anything to attract attention.

The size will be in any multiple of our Ontario Senior Citizens Card and it should be effective either as large as a poster or as small as a real postage stamp.

The trade will be done with cards, ordinary post-card size, with the LINK stamp printed on one side.

The committee which has been working on getting the program started will judge the competition. All but one are Senior Citizens. In case of a tie the deciding vote will be cast by Lawrence Crawford, Director of the Office on Aging, Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Deadline for designs to be at our office, Advisory Council on Senior Citizens, is April 1, 1978.

Address: Advisory Council on Senior Citizens,
3rd Floor, 801 Bay Street, Toronto, Ont. M5G 1Z1

If you wish your entry returned, if it is not the winner, please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.

You must file return to receive tax credits

Are you going to file an income tax return this year? You should. Even if you have no taxable income, in order to claim Ontario Tax Credits you must file an income tax return. The Credits, financed by the Province of Ontario, are a method used to return a portion of property tax and retail sales tax to those with modest incomes. There is also a Tax Credit specifically for Senior citizens to give them additional assistance in meeting their special needs.

If you are not waiting for T4 or T5 slips, or receipts for income tax purposes, file now and avoid the rush in March and April.

The three Ontario Tax Credits that are geared to assist moderate income groups are:

(1) Property Tax Credit: Claim it if you paid rent or property taxes in 1977.

(2) Sales Tax Credit: Claim this credit if you are not claimed as a dependant by anyone else, for income tax purposes.

(3) Pensioner Tax Credit: This credit is \$110 for a single person, 65 years of age or older. For married couples, if both spouses are 65 or older, only one may claim this credit.

If you have never filed an income tax return, or if you would like to learn more about this pro-

gram, you can call the Ontario Tax Credit Information Centre at the Ministry of Revenue free of charge. Ask the Operator for Zenith 8-2000. In Metro Toronto, dial 965-8470.

HEALTH INSURANCE A TRAVEL 'MUST'

In previous issues we have warned you to take out some form of supplementary health insurance if you are leaving the country on a holiday.

In some countries the difference between what OHIP will pay and what you will be charged could bankrupt you unless you are very rich.

We have mentioned the Blue Cross plan as a good one. We have heard from the Teachers' Superannuation Commission that they have good coverage underwritten by Co-operative Health Services of Ontario.

The carrier you choose is not important as long as it will make up most of the difference between what OHIP pays and what you will be charged if you are unfortunate enough to become ill or have an accident outside Canada.

We in Ontario (and in Canada, of course) are so used to getting free blood transfusions because of the Canadian Red Cross that we may forget that in most other countries they cost money.

Book Review

CELTIC ODYSSEY

As told to Eileen Sheila Hill
by William R. Price
Dorrance & Company

One of the exciting things about the newsletter "Especially for Seniors" is that it puts the Council in touch with so many interesting people.

The other day, a new book arrived on my desk (always an event). The letter accompanying it was by Bill Price. He had enjoyed the review of "Chalk Dust to Hayseed" and thought that I might be interested in his book.

I started to read it on a weekend and couldn't put it down. He makes you see the Wales he loved and left at 13 years of age. As a Dr. Barnardo's Home boy he had an opportunity to come to Canada and work on a farm. (I have a wooden box left by a girl of 13, from the Barnardo's Homes who came to be a companion for my grandmother).

He married, lived through the depression years, has a large family and at last owns his own Canadian Tire Store and is an active member of the community.

You may think that this sounds like just another book. Well it isn't, because William Price lets you into his heart and mind. Because of it you understand his love of learning, his struggle to survive and the kindness of the people in Arnprior.

The book is beautifully written and carries you along with pride in being a Canadian.

Anyone interested may obtain a copy by writing to Mr. William R. Price at 31 Gary Crescent, Arnprior, Ont. The original price is \$5.95 but Seniors can purchase it for \$3.95 postpaid.

Hope Holmsted
Chairman

Council Study Shows

Transportation needs not being met

Transportation ranks third in problems affecting Senior Citizens, a study conducted by a task force from the Advisory Council on Senior Citizens has concluded.

Only lack of money and restrictions due to poor health rate higher in the troubles facing older people.

Jack Parsons, of Toronto, wrote the report. The project, which began in 1976, was to make a study of transportation services in 15 Ontario communities, and the findings were such that it was recommended that the study be enlarged.

The report, which has been presented to the Hon. Margaret Birch, Provincial Secretary for Social Development, documents findings in 43 communities.

It covered population concentrations ranging from Vermilion Bay, with 400 residents, to St. Catharines, with 123,351, and the geographical locations covered every area of the province.

The review clearly identified three main concerns:

- (1) Transportation is a major factor in determining the quality and type of life-style of senior citizens.
- (2) Inadequate and insufficient mobility has a detrimental influence on the lives of senior citizens.
- (3) There is a lack of concern and concentrated effort for ensuring that adequate and appropriate transportation is available for seniors.

The committee, emphasizing that every citizen should have "access to opportunity" and that more consideration must be given to the special mobility problems,

of seniors, made the following recommendations.

1. Transportation for senior citizens must be adopted as a priority. It must not remain responsive only to isolated and emergency needs, but must be considered an integral part of all programs and services. Neither public nor private agencies can be expected to provide the total package of transportation services—co-ordination is one of the keys to avoid duplication.

2. Guidelines for developing community transportation programs must be outlined. Many communities have established a wide range of successful programs. Guidelines must be established to develop adequate transportation in individual communities and attention must be given to the various funding sources which can be used for programs and equipment.

3. Short-term strategies should include:

- (a) Special needs of the older population as a basic component of all future transit studies.
- (b) Recognition of a group of "officially" handicapped senior citizens requiring parallel transportation. The report recommends a co-ordinated effort with the Advisory Council on the Handicapped to ensure they receive adequate transportation services.
- (c) Immediate increased emphasis on the provision of certain modifications which make public transit more usable by seniors must include: Modifications in bus design, including lower

entrance and exit steps; grab-bars at entrances; reflector tape on grab-bars and stanchions; Shelters and benches at strategic locations.

(d) Reimbursement to volunteer drivers using their own cars.

(e) Subsidization of taxis where volunteer driving programs have not been established.

4. Long-Term strategies must include: Bringing to the attention of appropriate provincial authorities the following requirements:

- (a) To plan transportation services that will allow maximum utilization of the services by all citizens.
- (b) To purchase equipment that will meet the needs of all citizens.
- (c) To provide education for all transit personnel about the older population.
- (d) To research and evaluate alternatives to fixed route and fixed schedule approaches for individual communities.

5. Alerting Ontario municipalities to the need of providing adequate and appropriate transportation for the older population.

6. Alerting senior citizens of their responsibility:

- (a) to appeal to government bodies, federal, provincial and municipal for improved transportation services.

(b) To approach service clubs, churches, social agencies and volunteer agencies to request their involvement in the provision of transportation services.

(c) To organize transportation programs in their communities in consultation with the "Guidelines for the Developing Community Transportation Programs."

The questionnaires submitted show a great contrast in the type of service available. In Vermilion Bay, for example, the only transportation within the community is by taxi, so seniors walk, go with their families or use their own cars. But there is good service to nearby places by train, bus and taxi.

In Moonbeam, with a population of 1,000, there is poor service to other areas by train and bus. There is no waiting-room—the bus must be flagged down.

An overview of the findings by the committee notes that there is an overwhelming reliance on taxis and private cars. This makes it very difficult for those who do not own cars or cannot afford taxis.

It notes also that some hospitals are so located that visiting by seniors is particularly difficult and frustrating.

The report indicated also that in many communities there is very little volunteer transportation service supplied by service clubs and churches.



LETTERS

As a regular reader of Especially for Seniors I congratulate you on consistently producing an informative, instructive, interesting and often inspiring content in each issue.

Times are changing and it is now a fact that financial restraints are in effect in the federal, provincial and municipal governments. Almost certainly these restraints will continue and very probably will be increased.

The change from an affluent to a less affluent society will be difficult. Every age will be expected to bear a fair share of any hardships, which will include those of us who are in that ever-growing percentage of the population—Senior Citizens.

As a member of that approximately 50 per cent of Seniors who have reasonably good health, some degree of mental alertness and are financially independent of government assistance, I consider myself fortunate. I know that around 740,000 people in Ontario receive Especially for Seniors. So that means there are approximately 375,000 in the same fortunate group as myself.

I was somewhat disappointed in the Autumn issue wherein the work of the Council was reviewed. The rights and privileges were outlined in detail but no mention was made of citizenship responsibilities. Every one of those 375,000 have time and talents and an obligation to use them to help solve our social, economic, and other problems.

I would hope to see, in future issues, at least one page devoted to the young old, their responsibilities, their opportunities and their rewards.

**Wilson Abernethy,
Toronto.**



Wilson Abernethy

So glad to receive your paper
... I really enjoy it.

I would like to know if anyone worked for Mrs. Pankhurst during 1915. I carried the Union Jack for her at all her meetings. Then I got into something that

made more money. This was in London, England.

I am now 81 years of age.
**Mrs. Alice Young,
Downsview.**

I would like to know from your association with Senior Citizens whether you have had any "beefs" on TV programming.

I have passed the 80 mark.

I have been beefing to the government about programming. Many of us are using cable and day in and day out we are subjected to re-runs that we have already paid for.

Furthermore, I have yet to enjoy a program to my liking without false advertising. There is nothing for the elderly, but plenty of noise for the teenage class.

I have contacted the powers-that-be in Ottawa on this matter and I get the runaround. The Seniors should be interested in this subject matter.

I would be interested in your comments.

**W. D. Pope,
Waterloo, Ont.**

Thank you for your letter in which you explain the reason why many Seniors do not get "Especially for Seniors."

In Ottawa, one step is being taken. Resources for Retirement, a New Horizons project, designed to provide secretarial service for Seniors is planning to do the readdressing of the paper to those people who have their Old Age pension cheques sent to the Civil Service Co-operative Credit Society.

Such action is merely a stop-gap until your mailing system is perfected. I hope that will happen eventually.

**Marjorie Mann,
President,
Ottawa Senior Citizen Council**

(Sorry, but as we explain every time this matter comes up, we CAN'T change the mailing list. We use the same computerized list used for mailing Old Age Security cheques. The paper goes to the same address as the cheque. Changes of address for the cheques are made on the computer list but it would be impossible with our resources and staff to set up a special list for the newsletter. Ed.)

I am writing a few lines to thank you for the Seniors paper.

I would like to give you a few tips which might help some people. I was a cook and in my travels I learned a few tricks.

In winter when potatoes get a little black, boil them, drain and mash them and add a few grains of sugar. Beat well. They will be snow-white.

If you have a cauliflower which has turned a little off-color, cook

either whole or separated with a few grains of either sugar or vinegar. It will be white and will taste of neither the sugar nor the vinegar.

I have given these tips to quite a few people who are never too old to learn.

**Mrs. A. Drake (83 years old)
Hamilton, Ont.**

I hope your file containing replies to the article "Another Point of View," by Karl J. Traubold, has not been closed. Partly because of my advanced years and the necessity to keep as calm as possible (blood pressure and all that) I am making my contribution to the debate very short.

The writers of the replies you chose to publish in your Autumn '77 issue showed themselves to be respectable and smug. Respectability is the cloak under which fools cover their stupidity.

People lose their smugness and become mature when they remember two World Wars, a Korean war and a war in Viet Nam and they realize that mankind is mean, petty, muddledheaded, ignoble, bestial from the cradle to the deathbed, ignorant, slaves now of one superstition now of another, and illiberal, selfish and cruel.

**John Elder,
London, Ont.**

(In an earlier issue we ran a letter entitled This Is Something Only You Can Do, in which a reader explained how she had prepared a family history for her children and their descendants. Obviously some of you had the same excellent idea.)

I enjoyed the Senior Citizens summer number with the article, This Is Something Only You Can Do.

Well, I have done it, also. Three years ago I wrote a small booklet, Family Portraits For My Family. I wrote at least one short anecdote, sometimes more, about each person I had known in the family. I included both sides of my family, both Scottish and English, and the same for my husband's people who came from the north of Ireland.

Their dates of arrival ranged from 1790 to 1828 and in most cases I knew from where in Scotland, Ireland and England they came.

I had the work typed on high-grade paper and put in strong cardboard binders and gave them to my family as gifts. It was not an expensive project.

My hobby is local history and it is always leading me up another interesting path.

**Jean I. Powell,
Grimshy**

At age 70 I continue at my very active and stimulating job as

a designer of heating systems and writing articles for technical publications. Your items on preparing for retirement should be most encouraging to those whose employers have mandatory retirement at 65. Such a vast accumulation of skills, experience and judgment should not rust away as is too often the case.

In the summer 1977 issue I was particularly interested in This Is Something Only You Can Do by Mrs. Swayze of Welland.

While our children learn the history of ancient Egypt in school many of them have little knowledge of their own heritage. My ancestors came to Upper Canada as United Empire Loyalists, chopped a homestead out of the bush near Burlington and the fifth generation still lives in Ontario.

I am writing a book for my three grandsons who are, fortunately, farm boys. My title is Grandpa Was a City Kid. This story of my own boyhood creates the background of our family history and the significant changes in our life-style in the past 70 years.

Keep up the good work with your splendid paper.

**J. M. Mathewman,
Peterborough**

(Along with a letter from Albert Living of Whithy came a copy of a clipping from the Whithy Free Press headlined Great-grandfather, aged 75, wins on Gong Show. That was Mr. Living who won an all-expense weekend for two at the local Holiday Inn. Mr. Living is a volunteer who entertains patients at the Whithy Psychiatric Hospital. His letter follows.)

I thought you might be interested in the enclosed report from the Whithy Free Press. The reason I'm submitting it is to advise other seniors that their talents are appreciated by others, including the young, and should never be abandoned. Also, it is never too late to become accomplished at doing something that is a benefit and joy to others less fortunate.

I learned to play the harmonica after I retired at 65. I found it quite easy to master. I was always fond of music but made no attempt to learn an instrument until I retired. I play entirely by ear, having a repertoire of over 500 numbers from popular to semi-classical. It is not my intention to blow my own—in this case—horn, but to point out that we're never too old to learn. The body may wrinkle and weaken, but the spirit soars when you know you're making life a little more pleasant for those not so fortunate.

**Al Living,
Whithy, Ont.**

Make the cup that cheers a little smaller

The thousands of you among our readers who have never touched alcohol and don't intend to can skip this article because the important advice which follows will not affect you.

Nor is it directed to the so-called "problem drinkers" who have a long history of imbibing too much on a regular basis.

It is for the thousands of you who think a good meal deserves a good wine, that a relaxing drink or two before dinner perks up the appetite and that there is nothing more refreshing than a couple of cold beers on a hot day.

The advice comes from Dr. Sarah Saunders of the Addiction Research Foundation—cut down on your intake. What is a reasonable, sensible amount for a person of 40 or 50 may be far too much as you head into the seventies.

The reasons are physical. Women as a rule react to alcohol more quickly than men because they have less body water—a little bit goes further. However, as we get older the body-water in both sexes decreases and the amount you used to drink when you were younger will have quite a different effect on you as you get older.

Most people have sense enough to cut down on some of their physical activities as they grow older—they walk—but not as far—they don't shovel snow, because they know that physically it is beyond them.

However, too often, they don't think of alcohol in the same terms.

Authorities generally agree that it takes an hour for the liver to break down one ounce of alcohol. This is a healthy liver—but as we get older, our livers, like the rest of our bodies, are not spanking brand new. It could take longer.

And no matter what plays we use, eating, black coffee, etc., any alcohol taken into the system has to be handled by the liver.

Eating does slow down the absorption rate and will keep people from getting too merry too quickly, but the liver still has to handle it.

Black coffee does nothing, unless one drinks the coffee instead of the alcohol. The old movies we used to see where people sobered up on black coffee were scientifically wrong. As someone once remarked, all that black coffee gives you is a "wide-awake drunk."

Some people pride themselves on only drinking beer or wine. According to Dr. Saunders there is no difference between them. One can be as lethal or enjoyable as the other—depending on the amount.

About one and one-half ounces of whiskey contains the same amount of alcohol as nine ounces of beer.

Some women who turn up a genteel nose at their husband's beer-drinking habits like to think of sherry as a more lady-like drink.

In reality sherry is a fortified wine—and is much stronger than regular wines. The same goes for Dubonnet and vermouth—watch them.

Always use a measure, Dr. Saunders warns, then you know exactly what you are taking in.

Beer poses a special problem in that it is very high in calories. People who drink a few glasses feel that their calorie intake has been satisfied—and so it has, so they tend to eat less.

Unfortunately they are not getting enough of the other important nutrients and malnutrition is not uncommon among those who

drink too much of any type of alcohol.

Dr. Saunders points out that it is possible to become a problem drinker at any age, but many of the things which trigger the problem happen almost all at once to older people. Retirement comes as a shock to many people even though they think they have been looking forward to it.

There is also the problem of having to live on a fixed income and count the pennies more carefully. Loss of a spouse, a chronic illness—these can and do cause drinking problems in younger people. As people get older sometimes they all happen together.

In older people there is also the sense of isolation with which to cope. Whether the man liked his job or not he was surrounded by people as a rule, and whether or not they were really close friends, he misses them.

In some of the homes for the

aged where too much drinking has been a problem for a very small minority of residents, Dr. Saunders is carrying out long-term programs.

These people have not been told or asked to give up drinking all together, although some have done it. What the Foundation is trying to do is to involve them in other mind-changing interests which include other people.

They are beginning to see that there are better ways to live than putting in time sitting in front of a television set with a glass in their hands.

For the ordinary social drinker all Dr. Saunders suggests is you be aware of the amount you are taking and to cut it down gradually, to get it to the point that you will never have enough to make you woozy to the point of falling and hurting yourself, or that you put too much strain on the only liver you've got.



Home support, residential care better under single ministry

Four strong recommendations covering Home Care Administration, Impact of Charging, Local Co-ordination and Institutional Arrangements for Senior Citizens in Residential Care have been sent to the Hon. Margaret Birch, Provincial Secretary for Social Development, by the Advisory Council on Senior Citizens.

The recommendations were a reaction to the voluminous study brought out by the government entitled *The Report of the Inter-ministerial Committee on Residential Services*. It deals with both children and adults, but the Council on Seniors concerned itself only with the elderly in the province who are affected—about per cent of a total of more than 750,000 people 65 years of age and over.

Two of the recommendations, one concerning home support service and the other, that all residential care units be placed under one ministry, Community and Social Services, brought the following comment from Hope Holmested, chairman of the Advisory Council.

"I believe that all the recommendations are valid," she said. "However the ideal situation would be for the Ministries of Health and Community and Social Services to work together to achieve what must be done."

"The Council believes that the government has 'sat on' the report as it affects seniors far too long. Some changes have been made in residential care for younger people but our mandate is concern for the elderly."

The brief stressed that it is the committee's conviction that seniors should remain independent

in their own communities as long as possible and to achieve this goal Home Support services are needed. At present they are not always readily available, are sometimes inaccessible and not well co-ordinated.

Council recommended that all Home Support Services be administered by one ministry at the provincial level and the consensus was that it be the Ministry of Community and Social Services. (Some such services are now the responsibility of the Ministry of Health).

Council recommended also that a universal per diem charge for the four broad categories of continuing care—Chronic, Extended, Intermediate and Residential be instituted. For those whose incomes exceed the minimum provided by Old Age Security, GAINS and GIS, there be a sliding scale of per diem charges based on income with due regard to family needs and not exceeding a determined maximum residential rate.

The intention of this second recommendation is to eliminate the present financial incentives for individuals to be registered under the higher levels of care

which they may not need but which cost less because they are funded through the OHIP program.

When levying fees against an individual going into an institution it should be borne in mind that he or she will face demands on his income when re-entering the community. The spouse of an institutionalized person can suffer financially—hence the sliding scale.

For the eight per cent of seniors who may find it necessary to enter a residential care institution either permanently or temporarily there must be some resource that he or she will be in the right place at the right time.

People must have a right to make some sort of choice and a sensitive assessment will be the key to achieving this goal. At the moment there exists a general attitude that entering a residential facility is a permanent state.

An educational program is required to change this point of view and emphasize rehabilitation. However, the most serious problems at present are possibly in the area of screening, placement, provision of adequate information and referral services.

Council recommended the establishment of independent

local co-ordinating agencies responsible for the assessment, placement and co-ordination of services for seniors entering continuing care institutions and referral for Home Support Services if institutional care is not required.

Two Ontario ministries are involved in administering residential care. The Ministry of Health looks after Chronic Care Hospitals and Nursing Homes and the Ministry of Community and Social Services looks after Homes for the Aged and Charitable Institutions.

Council recommended that all these residential care institutions be placed under The Ministry of Community and Social Services to ensure uniform standards and funding and co-ordination of admission policies.

The Advisory Council on Senior Citizens can, of course, only recommend to the government. Your contribution, whether you agree or disagree, should be to write to your local member of the Ontario Legislature and state your point of view.

Don't write to the Council. The staff is very small and the letters would have to be forwarded. This would only delay things.

HALF AN HOUR ON THE PHONE

Help a learner to overcome His hesitation to speak English

A pilot project designed to help newcomers learn language skills is getting underway in Metro Toronto and by the interest shown could certainly soon have province-wide acceptance, providing volunteer groups feel it is worth organizing.

Called *Help a Friend To Learn English*, it was developed by the Citizenship Branch of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation.

The problem the branch is trying to solve is that a newcomer to Canada who is trying to learn English has limited opportunities to practise what he has learned. Many are not brave enough to try out their hesitant English with strangers—lest people laugh at them.

The plan does not require teachers as volunteers. All that is needed is that they speak English reasonably clearly, that they are patient and have a cheerful disposition and are willing to spend half-an-hour a week ON THE TELEPHONE helping a newcomer practise his English.

The student pays only \$2.50 for a phrase book—the volunteer

receives one free. Lesson leaflets are provided by the branch.

The Metro pilot project is for Spanish-speaking students only at this point, but the phrase book has already been translated into Italian, Portuguese, Korean and Chinese. These will be printed as soon as the viability of the pilot program has been established.

Alex Carruthers dead

Seniors across Ontario and, indeed Canada, lost a friend in the death of Alex Carruthers, former member of the provincial legislature for Durham.

Mr. Carruthers retired from political life some years ago. A long-time resident of Port Hope, Mr. Carruthers chaired the Select Committee on Aging from May 8, 1964 until February, 1967. That committee's final report had wide-ranging impact on several programs in this and other provinces. It was also Ontario's counterpart to the Senate Committee's report.

Mr. Carruthers gave unstintingly of his time and talents to

Any person or organization interested in this project should write to:

Mr. John McHugh,
Help a Friend Learn English,
Citizenship Branch,
Ministry of Culture and Recreation,
5th Floor, 77 Bloor St. W.,
Toronto M7A 2R9

the work of the committee and personally sponsored, among other matters, Senior Citizens' Week in June of each year.

The Committee received some 90 briefs and made 180 major visits to Centres, Homes and other facilities across North America, including public hearings, two-thirds of which were in Ontario.

Mr. Carruthers was an educator, a beloved high school principal, a proponent of local government and a devoted husband and father.

(In memoriam,
L. Crawford)